

CHAPTER FOUR

THE EMPIRE IN TRANSITION

Objectives

A thorough study of Chapter Four should enable the student to understand:

1. The primary reasons for the growth of the differences between colonial Americans and the British government that resulted in a clash of interests.
2. The colonial attitudes toward England and toward other colonies before the Great War for empire.
3. The causes of the Great War for empire, and the reasons for the French defeat.
4. The effects of the war on the American colonists and on the status of the colonies within the British Empire.
5. The options available to the British for dealing with the colonies in 1763, and the reasons for adopting the policies that they chose to implement.
6. The importance of the series of crises from the Sugar Act through the Coercive Acts, and how each crisis changed colonial attitudes toward the mother country.
7. The change in American attitudes toward Parliament, the English constitution, and the king. What such slogans as "No taxation without representation" really meant.
8. The significance of the convening of the First Continental Congress, and what it accomplished.
9. Lexington and Concord—who fired the first shot, and does it really matter?

Main Theme

How it was that colonists who, for the most part, had enjoyed benefits unattainable by their European counterparts, rose in rebellion against the nation that was responsible for their circumstances.

Glossary

1. imperialism: The policy of extending a nation's sovereignty to include possessions beyond the boundaries of the nation (colonies). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this was directly associated with mercantilism.
2. sovereignty: Supreme power, independent of and unlimited by any other force, as in a sovereign state.
3. old colonial system: The period extending from the mid-seventeenth century to the mid-eighteenth century, characterized by the acts, regulations, and enforcement institutions used by Britain to govern its colonies. Influenced by the theory of mercantilism, England first tried to direct colonial commerce through the mother country and regulate it through the Board of Trade and Plantations. But finding that the colonies (and, as a result, the empire) prospered under a less restrictive system, England eased enforcement, and the policy of "salutary neglect" (neglect for the good of all) emerged. It has been argued that had the British not altered this policy during and after the Great War for the empire, the American Revolution might not have taken place as it did, so content were the colonists with the economic freedom and relative self-government that the "old colonial system" provided.

4. new colonial system: The system that emerged after 1763 (although there is evidence that the change was taking place in the 1740s) when the British government decided to reorganize the colonial system on more efficient (and profitable) lines. What it did was to alter the relationship between colonies and the mother country, stressing the supremacy of the latter just at the time that most North American provinces were feeling more secure and self-confident than ever before. Characterized by a series of acts that not only taxed the colonies, but also attempted to enforce collection, this "new" system stood in stark contrast to the "old" and raised fears in the colonies that if these actions were not opposed, even worse would follow. From the British standpoint, however, the "new colonial system" was simply an effort to get the colonies to pay for their own administration and to discourage the illegal trade that had flourished during the period of salutary neglect—neither of which concept the mother country felt was unreasonable.
5. commonwealth: A political body governed by its own elected representatives.
6. federation: A union of sovereign powers in which each unit retains the power to control its own local affairs.
7. right of revolution: A concept found in the writings of John Locke which holds that if a government denies its people their natural rights, those people have the right—indeed, the duty—to rise up against the oppressive government, overthrow it (by force if necessary), and establish a more responsive government in its place. This, Locke contended, was what had taken place during the Glorious Revolution. It was also, Thomas Jefferson later contended, what brought about the American Revolution.
8. Whig: The name given the English political faction responsible for the Glorious Revolution. Basing its power in Parliament, it opposed arbitrary rule by the monarch, calling instead for the country to be governed by the representatives chosen by those people qualified to vote (essentially an electorate limited to the upper-class males). In America, many who protested against England's new colonial system adopted the name Whig, to indicate that they, too, opposed arbitrary rule and believed that government should rest in the hands of the people's representatives. Their point, however, was that the British government (specifically Parliament at first and later the king) was attempting to govern without legitimate authority and that the true representatives of the people in the colonies were the colonial assemblies. In this way, colonial opponents of British policies called attention to their belief that their protests were part of the tradition of opposition to tyranny on which the very government they protested claimed to have been founded.
9. Loyalists (Tories): Americans who, for many and varied reasons, remained loyal to the king and were called Tories by American Whigs. The name Tory came from the English political faction that supported the king and was less willing to see Parliament (especially the House of Commons) rise to power. American Tories rejected this classification, calling themselves Loyalists instead. In fact, some Loyalists argued that the real threat to liberty was not the king and Parliament, but groups, such as the Sons of Liberty, that carried out their programs through threats and violence. By opposing such people, the Loyalists contended, they were the ones who stood firm against arbitrary rule and for representative government—in short, that they were the true Whigs.
10. democracy: A system of government in which the ultimate power to govern resides with the people, and they exercise that power directly. Although not the prevailing system in colonial America (it is actually viewed with horror by colonial elites), elements of democracy were found in such institutions as church covenants and town meetings.

11. republic: A government in which, as in a democracy, the power to govern lies with the people, but the people exercise this power through elected representatives. Colonial elites distrusted this form as well, especially when low qualifications to vote threatened to allow mass participation. Nevertheless, this system was more acceptable than direct democracy was. For example, examine the colonial legislatures.

Pertinent Questions

A LOOSENING OF TIES (100-101)

1. How did the relationship between king and Parliament change during the early eighteenth century? What role did the prime minister play in this change?
2. How were the American colonies administered by Britain, from Britain, during this period? What was the effect of this policy?
3. How did British officials in the colonies carry out (or fail to carry out) their duties, and what was the effect of their activities?
4. How was England's hold on the colonies weakened between 1700 and 1775?
5. What factors helped promote colonial divisions during this period?
6. What was the Albany Plan, and what did it reveal about colonial unity.

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE CONTINENT (101-105)

7. To what areas of North America had the French laid claim by 1750?
8. How did the French attempt to secure their hold on the vast areas they claimed?
9. What could the French and the English offer the Indians who lived in the continental interior? What did the French offer that was "often more important" than what the British promised, and what made it so significant?
10. What were the causes and results of Anglo-French conflicts between 1686 and 1748? What role did the American colonies of each play in these?
11. What caused the Great War for the empire, and why is it called by that name?
12. How did the Great War for the empire become a "truly international conflict," and how did Britain carry out its part in the struggle?
13. What role did the French and British colonies play in this war?
14. What were the terms of the Peace of Paris of 1763?

THE NEW IMPERIALISM (105-111)

15. What dilemma faced London policymakers at the end of the Great War for the Empire?
16. What arguments were raised for and against the post-1763 "territorial imperialism," and how did this new policy alter British attitudes toward the colonies?
17. What initial policy changes occurred when George III ascended the throne, and what were the king's motives for these changes?
18. How were the policy changes cited in question 17 reflected in the acts passed under the Grenville administration? Deal with the specific acts as well as general policy objectives.
19. What was it about post-1763 British policy that would cause colonists in every section to see the disadvantages rather than the advantages of being part of the British Empire?

STIRRINGS OF REVOLT (111-119)

20. Why did the Stamp Act so antagonize the American colonists?
21. Who sounded the "trumpet of sedition" in Virginia over the Stamp Act? What reasons, other than those stated in the resolutions proposed, contributed to this action? What was the effect of this, and what were the results?
22. How did actions by the Stamp Act crowd raise questions of whether protests in the colonies represented more than opposition to British policies?
23. What was England's response to the American protests over the Stamp Act. Explain the policies of Charles Townshend and of Lord North differ.
24. What role did Samuel Adams play in the American protests? How did his view of the need for American independence differ from those of most other colonial leaders at the time?
25. How did the colonial view of the nature of the British Empire differ from the view by George III and his supporters?
26. What was the "political outlook" that gained a following in America and ultimately served to justify revolt?
27. Why was the Tea Act seen by many Americans as a threat to themselves and their institutions?
28. What were the Coercive Acts? How did the Quebec Act help to unite the colonies with Boston in opposition to these acts?

COOPERATION AND WAR (119-122)

29. What role was played by committees of correspondence in the American protests?
30. What were the five major decisions made at the First Continental Congress, and what was their significance?
31. What British leaders spoke out in support of the American cause, and what were their reasons for doing so?
32. What were the circumstances that led to the fighting at Lexington and Concord?

PATTERNS OF POPULAR CULTURE (118)

33. How and why did taverns become a central institution in colonial American social life?
34. What circumstances and events helped make taverns central to political life as well?

Identification

Identify each of the following, and explain why it is important within the context of the chapter.

1. Robert Walpole
2. Board of Trade and Plantations
3. Treaty of Utrecht
4. King George's War
5. Edward Braddock
6. William Pitt
7. James Wolfe
8. Proclamation of 1763
9. Sugar Act of 1764
10. Paxton Boys

11. Regulators
12. Sons of Liberty
13. Declaratory Act
14. Mutiny Act
15. Townshend Duties
16. Boston Massacre
17. Massachusetts Circular Letter
18. John Adams
19. The English Constitution
20. "virtual" representation
21. Gaspee incident
22. The Tea Boycott
23. Intolerable Acts
24. Continental Association
25. Conciliatory Propositions

Document 1

Below is an extract from the resolutions of the Stamp Act Congress, passed in 1765. Note the line of argument. How do the resolutions reflect attitudes toward local control of local affairs developed over the preceding century?

- I. That His Majesty's subjects in these colonies owe the same allegiance to the Crown of Great Britain that is owing from his subjects born within the realm, and all due subordination to that august body the Parliament of Great Britain.
- II. That His Majesty's liege subjects in these colonies are intitled to all the inherent rights and liberties of his natural born subjects within the kingdom of Great Britain.
- III. That it is inseparably essential to the freedom of a people, and the undoubted right of Englishmen, that no taxes be imposed on them but with their own consent, given personally or by their representatives.
- IV. That the people of these colonies are not, and from their local circumstances cannot be, represented in the House of Commons in Great Britain.
- V. That the only representatives of the people of these colonies are persons chosen therein by themselves, and that no taxes ever have been, or can be constitutionally imposed on them, but by their respective legislatures. . . .

Document 2

The following excerpt is from the Declaratory Act of 1766. In it, how does Parliament refute American claims? How does the Declaratory Act reflect the English view of the nature of the empire as opposed to the view held by most colonists?

Whereas several of the houses of representatives in his Majesty's colonies and plantations in America have of late, against law, claimed to themselves or to the general assemblies of the same, the sole and exclusive right of imposing duties or taxes upon his Majesty's subjects in the said colonies and plantations; and have, in pursuance of such claim, passed certain votes, resolutions, and orders, derogatory to the legislative authority of parliament, and inconsistent with the dependency of said

Chapter Self Test

After you have read the chapter in the text and done the exercises in the Study Guide, take the following self test to see if you understand the material you have covered. Answers appear at the end of the Study Guide.

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

Circle the letter of the response which best answers the question or completes the statement.

1. By the 1750s colonial legislatures had come to see themselves as:
 - a. little parliaments.
 - b. agents of the royal governor.
 - c. powerless.
 - d. agents for democratic reform.
2. A conference of colonial leaders gathered in Albany, New York, in 1754 to discuss a proposal by Benjamin Franklin to:
 - a. establish "one general government" for all of the colonies.
 - b. negotiate a treaty with the French.
 - c. expand a system of intercolonial roads.
 - d. extend the operation of the colonial postal service.
3. Both the French and the English were well aware that the battle for control of North America would be determined in part by:
 - a. who had the Dutch on their side.
 - b. whose king was the best military commander.
 - c. which group could win the allegiance of native tribes.
 - d. whose armies could best fight "Indian" fashion.
4. The British victory in the Great War for the empire:
 - a. expelled France and Spain from North America.
 - b. gave England control of the settled regions of North America, including Canada and Florida.
 - c. resulted in the defeat of all North American Indian tribes.
 - d. resulted in less contact between Britain and America.
5. Prior to the Great War for the empire, the Iroquois Confederacy:
 - a. traded exclusively with the English.
 - b. traded exclusively with the French.
 - c. maintained their autonomy by avoiding a close relationship with both French and the English.
 - d. traded only with the five tribes that made up the Confederacy.
6. Which of the following did not occur during the Great War for the empire?
 - a. Americans were reimbursed for supplies requisitioned in their British colonies.
 - b. Colonial assemblies were in charge of recruitment in their respective colonies.
 - c. The French lost the city of Quebec.
 - d. Most of the fighting was done by colonial militia.

7. For which of the following was the result of the Great War for the empire a disaster?
 - a. English frontiersmen and traders.
 - b. Colonial merchants.
 - c. The Iroquois Confederacy.
 - d. The Royal Africa Company.
8. The English decision to reorganize the British Empire after 1763 was the result of:
 - a. colonial demands for more efficient government.
 - b. problems in the merchant community and their desire for regulation.
 - c. colonial unrest, which the British government planned to put down before it become serious.
 - d. a need to administer an empire that was now twice as large as it had been.
9. In an effort to keep peace between frontiersmen and Indians and provide for a more orderly settlement of the West, the British government:
 - a. forbade settlers from crossing the mountains that divided the Atlantic coast from the interior.
 - b. gave Indian tribes and confederations colonial status.
 - c. allowed interior settlement only if settlers bought land from the tribes.
 - d. put forts in the Ohio Valley to protect settlers there.
10. Which of the following was a consequence of the policies of the Grenville ministry?
 - a. British tax revenues in the colonies increased ten times.
 - b. Colonists effectively resisted and paid little tax.
 - c. Many colonial merchants went out of business.
 - d. Colonial assemblies assumed the responsibility for taxing their individual colonies.
11. The Regulator movement of 1771 consisted of:
 - a. Pennsylvania frontiersmen who demanded attention from the colonial government for their defense needs.
 - b. farmers of the Carolina upcountry who protested lack of representation and forcibly resisted tax collection.
 - c. northern merchants who refused to comply with the restrictions of the Grenville program.
 - d. western farmers who protested the Proclamation of 1763.
12. British policies after 1763:
 - a. destroyed the economy of the American colonies.
 - b. stripped colonial assemblies of their authority.
 - c. created a deep sense of economic unease, particularly in colonial cities.
 - d. actually helped the colonial economy.
13. Colonists argued that the Stamp Act was not proper because:
 - a. it affected only a few people, so the burden was not shared.
 - b. the money raised would not be spent in the colonies.
 - c. colonies could be taxed only by their provincial assemblies.
 - d. the tax was too high.

14. British authorities decided to repeal the Stamp Act primarily because of the:
 - a. passage of the "Virginia Resolves."
 - b. well-reasoned petitions of the Stamp Act Congress.
 - c. intimidation tactics employed by the Sons of Liberty.
 - d. economic pressure caused by a colonial boycott of English goods.
15. Colonists were most upset over the Mutiny Act (Quartering Act) of 1765 because it:
 - a. required that the colonies pay the soldiers expenses.
 - b. quartered troops in private residences.
 - c. required colonies to draft citizens to serve in the Army.
 - d. punished innocent civilians for the vague crime of "mutiny."
16. Colonial "committees of correspondence" were created to:
 - a. keep colonial intellectuals in contact with each other.
 - b. publicize grievances against England.
 - c. improve the writing skills of young gentlemen.
 - d. correspond with English radicals who supported the American cause.
17. American complaints concerning lack of representation made little sense to the English who pointed out that:
 - a. over eighty percent of the population of Great Britain was entitled to vote for members of Parliament.
 - b. each colony was represented by an agent and a designated member of Parliament.
 - c. each member of Parliament represented the interests of the whole empire rather than a particular individual or geographical area.
 - d. American participation in parliamentary discussions would bind them to unpopular decisions.
18. Colonists felt that when the English constitution was allowed to function properly, it created the best political system because it:
 - a. distributed power among the three elements of society—the monarchy, the aristocracy, and the common people.
 - b. created a republican government.
 - c. created a democracy.
 - d. put power in the hands of those best suited to govern.
19. The Coercive Acts or "Intolerable Acts":
 - a. isolated Massachusetts from the other colonies.
 - b. made Massachusetts a martyr in the eyes of other colonists.
 - c. created no concern among any group other than merchants.
 - d. increased the power of colonial assemblies.
20. Which of the following was not a step taken by the First Continental Congress?
 - a. It adopted a plan for a colonial union under British authority.
 - b. It endorsed a statement of grievances.
 - c. It called for military preparations.
 - d. It called for a series of boycotts.

TRUE-FALSE QUESTIONS

Read each statement carefully. Mark true statements "T" and false statements "F."

1. By the 1750s most Americans felt little loyalty to the British crown.
2. The French were able to forge good relations with the Indian tribes because they were more tolerant of the Indian way of life than the British were.
3. Before the Great War for the empire, England, France, and Spain had been at peace with each other for nearly half a century.
4. The Seven Years' War, the French and Indian War, and the Great War for the Empire are all the same war.
5. After the Peace of Paris of 1763, the English were inclined to let the colonies go their own way, with few restrictions.
6. England was fortunate that King George III was young, bright, and surprisingly mature for his age.
7. Because they needed protection, colonists in both the East and the West were glad to have regular British troops stationed permanently in America.
8. The Paxton Boys and the Regulator movement revealed that colonists in the West believed they were not being treated fairly by colonists in the East.
9. The Stamp Act was particularly ill-designed by the British, for it evoked opposition from some of the most powerful and strategically placed members of the colonial population.
10. Colonists were concerned over the immediate impact of the Stamp Act, not its long-range implications.
11. Parliament repealed the Stamp Act and in the Declaratory Act it declared that it would not tax the colonies in this way again.
12. Colonists responded to the Townshend Duties with agreements not to import the taxed goods.
13. Americans wanted their representatives to "actually" represent them, while the British claimed the Parliament represented all British citizens, no matter where they lived.
14. Among the basic principles held by Americans was the belief that people should be taxed only with their own consent.
15. The British soldiers involved in the "Boston Massacre" were convicted of murder and hung.
16. Women, especially southern women, took no part in the protests and boycotts rising from the Coercive Acts.
17. By the time the First Continental Congress convened in 1774, a growing majority of Americans agreed upon the necessity of a declaration of independence.
18. Lord North assumed that most colonists would welcome the Tea Act of 1773 because it made tea cheaper.
19. Those who attended the Continental Congress did not intend for it to be a continuing organization.
20. The fighting at Lexington and Concord caused many who previously had little enthusiasm for the rebel cause to rally to it.